

CIRCLE

SPECIAL HENDRIX REPORT!

- How His Fans Betrayed Him
- Behind 'Hendrix in the West'
- Guidebook to All the Hendrix LP's
- Free Hendrix Color Poster

Will Crimson Split Again?



Robert Fripp: King Crimson is crumbling around him . . . or is it?



Ian Anderson: The new album is "personal, filled with conviction," and shrouded with confusion.

TULL: 'THE RIDDLE OF 'THICK AS A BRICK'



Lee Michaels Rebels Against Top 40 Rock

SAN FRANCISCO — On Lee's last album, 5th, he captured his first hit single. Now he seems to be deliberately avoiding another chart-topper. On his new LP, Space and First Takes, Michaels has tossed away the ten-tune, singles-oriented approach that made 5th so popular and has laced into "long rock & roll jams." "I get bored with my albums after I've made them," Lee announced between bites of steak at an elegant restaurant. "After you've done it once, why do it again?"

Hendrix In The West: The Story Of The Posthumous LP's

Mitch Mitchell and Eddie Kramer sit in the green glow of Jimi Hendrix's studio, editing boxes of tape. Around is the storm that led to Hendrix In The West.

Electric Lady Studios on Eighth St. in Manhattan's Greenwich Village is smack dab in the middle of the most commercialized section of what was once a quiet, if somewhat quaint, retreat for artists and eccentrics. The building can't be missed; the front curves out awkwardly like the poop of an ancient Spanish galleon. In bold metallic letters it declares its electricity. Inside, the time warp that once declared the existence of a new consciousness can still be felt. The walls are painted with lush vistas opening into space; children of the sun in golden ships glide effortlessly through the black vastness of the skies, skirting suns and planets in their endless pursuit of eternity.

Electric Lady is the last fortress of the Hendrix legacy—built by his money, and planned by his mind and the mind of his engineer, Eddie Kramer. It is now the repository of his musical remains—tapes only a privileged few have heard.

Hints of trouble: Seated within the soft green glow of Studio B, Mitch Mitchell—Hendrix's ex-drummer—fidgets nervously as he talks. Behind the maze of buttons and dials, Eddie Kramer sits composed, here pressing a button, there sliding a control further upward. Magic sounds beam out of two giant speakers suspended

above the control panel, sounds that have been heard before. It's the opening of the album *Electric Landlady*, mixed differently, recognizable but more decidedly razor sharp in its approach: the guitars buzzing madly, the bass looming grandly from behind the relentless barrage of spiked sound. Except for the roar of the speakers, the studio is silent. No one wants to say anything; no one knows if there is anything that can be said. The version coming from the speakers is better than the one found on the album. It is obvious from the distress on everyone's face that this is probably the version most people wanted released, but somewhere in the process there was a mix-up. Maybe it was edited incorrectly by the record company, maybe it was deliberately cut, no one wants to talk about it.

Mitch Mitchell is not an emotional man, but even he is visibly upset by the memories. He disappears from the studio, not to reappear for another half hour.

"Disappearance #17," sighs a weary engineer.

The final LP's: *Hendrix In The West* (the newly released Hendrix LP) . . . *Rainbow Bridge* (the LP released last September) . . . *Hendrix At The Isle Of Wight* (the LP which will probably come out next)—all of them were shaped in the dim green light of Electric Lady's control rooms. Somewhere in Electric Lady's otherworldly caverns and tie-dyed corridors rest another 300 to 400 boxes of tape—three or four hundred reels of unedited Hendrix magic. And somewhere in the minds of those who pilot Electric Lady through the storms of record business politics is a master plan for the last of the posthumous Hendrix albums. *Hendrix In The West* (Reprise) was part of that plan. It contains live material performed at such places as the Berkeley Community Center, the San Diego Sports Arena, and even the Isle Of Wight, with original Hendrix material like "Red House," "Little Wing," or "Voodoo Child" alongside early and late rock classics like "Sergeant Pepper," "Johnny B. Goode," and "Blue Suede Shoes."

Hidden tapes: The next album in the master plan will be the famous appearance at the Isle Of Wight, already a big seller in England. This was Hendrix's last visit to the stage and his last recording, but many of

his associates were reluctant to see it released because they felt the sound quality was poor and the performance not up to Jimi's standards. Nonetheless, the album is expected to emerge here sometime during the summer. The last LP in the plan is tentatively titled *War Heroes*. It will consist of uncompleted studio tracks and possibly a live cut or two.

After *War Heroes* there will be . . . nothing! The barrel will have been scraped clean. All the material "considered suitable for the public" will have been used up. The hundreds of boxes of tapes that remain will be moved to the dusk of Electric Lady's storage rooms. There they will stay, unseen and unheard by all but Hendrix's "immediate associates." The legacy will be closed to the public forever.

Making the final disks: But until then, Mitch Mitchell, the only musician considered knowledgeable enough to edit Hendrix's work, is faced with an incredible task. Out of hundreds of hours of rough tapes, he must choose forty minutes of music that will make a final tribute to Hendrix's entire career. The work has been going on for nearly a year now, and no one is quite sure when it will really be over.

In an evening marked by disappearances into unknown passages between Electric Lady's rooms, reappearances to rearrange the drum set, adjust the mike, give a listen to a song on which he is attempting to lay down new drum tracks, and subsequent disappearances, Mitch explained the struggles that occurred before he began producing the tapes.

"Immediately after Hendrix's death, that thing went down. Warner Bros. had hundreds of reels of tapes and Electric Lady had 'X' number of tapes and we were all playing numbers and games to see who was going to release what and who was going to hold what back. Eighteen producers, including ex-manager producers of the Jimi Hendrix Experience, phoned up within 24 hours of his death and said, 'O.K. don't worry, we'll produce it, we'll do it.'

Abortion of Rainbow Bridge: I thought that this was two years of my life and it was my work not theirs, so I decided to do it. So after nine years on the road I just split to put the house in order. I mucked about the studio and spent time mixing down the tapes and making

the best job of it I could. At first studios were new to me, just like playing noughts and crosses, so I learned the board. I had worked in studios for a number of years, but now I realized I didn't know quite what was going on. So I got a good engineer that I had worked with and went from there. We did the *Rainbow Bridge* film and tracks thing, and that was a pretty abortive movie you know.

When Mitchell got up and deserted Studio B once more, Eddie Kramer—the engineer who helped shape the Hendrix sound, co-produced *Cry Of Love*, *Rainbow Bridge*, *Hendrix In The West*, and is still working on *War Heroes*—swung his chair around and spoke his own thoughts on the void created by Hendrix's death.

"Hendrix loved this studio, you can still feel his presence around here. I remember shortly after it was built I used to come down here and find him already here playing. That used to amaze me because he was always late for everything and to find him here sometimes in the early afternoon was really a surprise. You were talking about the sound quality of the latest two albums (*Cry Of Love* and *Rainbow Bridge*)—recorded at The Record Plant) before and how it was so different. That had a lot to do with the studio, but we could have gotten pretty much the same sound on *Electric Landlady* if we had wanted to; things haven't changed that much in two years. It was just the sound that Hendrix was feeling at that time. He called it 'space-gospel' or something like that.

Cry of love: "That's why I was so upset when he died, as you can imagine, having been so close to him. After the studios had been built he had really gotten himself together and was starting to be successful in his attempts to find those new sounds he was talking about.

"I couldn't go into a studio for months, or listen to any of his tapes, it was so painful. One of the reasons the Experience broke up was that right after *Electric Ladyland* Hendrix began feeling very depressed. He felt that he wasn't doing anything new and that's why he got together with Buddy Miles and Billy Cox. After that the studio was built, and that's when most of the recording that has been coming out was done."

According to Kramer, *Cry Of Love* (Reprise), which was original-

ly supposed to be called *Rainbows and Gypsies*, was just about completed when Hendrix died. Kramer had spoken to Jimi the week before in London, and they had decided to finish up the album with a few final mixes and maybe a guitar over-dub or two.

"Many of these tracks on the posthumous albums were incomplete. Of course they don't sound that way, but Hendrix was a perfectionist and I'm sure some of the stuff we have released he would not have permitted to go out. This includes some of the studio tracks and especially some of the live stuff, which I think is awful. I didn't want them to release the Isle Of Wight performance but there was nothing I could do about it. *Rainbow Bridge* has songs that were supposed to be used as background in the soundtrack, even though none of the live performance will ever be released on record, but these were tunes that Hendrix had decided were to be used for that movie. We don't know when we're going to finish the album we're working on now. It really is a lot of

work, but we're doing the best we can even though I know Jimi would not have approved of most of it, simply because it would not come up to his standards.

Jimi was shy: "He was quite a remarkable man you know, and the greatest guitarist that ever lived. There won't be another like him. You know, it was nothing for him to go twenty-two hours in the studio without a break until he got what he wanted. He would sit in there and play line after line, starting over again and playing it differently and then doing it over again until he got it perfect. Sometimes I would have to beg him not to erase stuff that I thought was fantastic, but which he considered shitty. And he was very shy, especially about his singing. I remember the first time he had to sing in our first London sessions—he was terrified. He didn't know what to do behind that mike. When we were recording we had to put up screens so that we couldn't look at him when he was doing the vocal parts. He was terribly unsure about his singing; he thought he had a terrible voice, but I think his voice was beautiful." •

Jimi Hendrix: Somewhere in the surrealistic rooms of Hendrix's studio rest hundreds of boxes of tapes—bits of Hendrix magic the public will never hear.



Among the Greenwich Village hangouts giving birth to giant talents in the mid sixties was a dark and shoddy basement called *The Cafe Wha?* During the great white British invasion, the *Wha?* showcased teens of all shapes and sizes, feverishly banging tambourines against their shins while screeching into faulty microphones. No one actually played at the caveman-like club for the bread. The devoted became moles six hours a day in order to gain exposure and even-

with more reality on his shoulders than one man should be expected to carry.

Feedback from the groin: Without a warning, Jimmy James and his group The Blue Flames, took *The Cafe Wha?* by storm. Jimmy would jump onstage, plug in his Fender Stratocaster, turn his amp up to ten and virtually blast off! The walls shook, as his guitar filled the tiny room with resounding Leer jetlike feedback. Right away, you knew the dude was weird. For starters, he played his right-handed axe backwards—that is, left handed and upside down—but ironically he strung his instrument in the conventional manner. Physically, there were no limitations to the variety of ways in which he handled the guitar. He played it inside out, right side up, behind his back and in between his legs. He plucked notes out with his teeth, slurped out cords with his tongue and twanged out melodies with his groin. Up until Jimmy James arrived, everyone had hailed Jeff Beck as “feedback king” of the world, what with “Happenings Ten Years Time Ago” and his early Yardbirds stuff. But, this black kid was a past master of the art. He would rub his strings on the speaker cabinet and get them feeding back to the speakers, hanging on to the note and getting incredibly long sustain with tremendous distortion. The shy kid from the “uptown” bars was colossal, and what’s more, he added a flamboyant spark to what was becoming a decaying scene. No one really understood what he was about, but they all dug it.

Kidnapped by success: Then, all of a sudden it happened. One day during his break, a couple of English gents came in and took Jimmy James out for a cup of coffee. It was funny, ‘cause we never saw him again after that. All the musicians knew what was going to happen next, but none of us expected it so fast. Sure enough, six months later, we spotted his record in an English import bin. His photograph on the album cover sure looked strange; trick lenses or something. But it wasn’t just his clothes or his hair or even the fact that he had changed his name. It was his smile! It was part smile, part half-assed smirk, a sort of Seventh Avenue pimp-like smile that read through the cellophane wrapping. “Dig this baby, my name’s J-I-M-I HENDRIX and I’m what’s happening.”

James Marshall Hendrix was

born on November 27, 1942 in Seattle, Washington, the son of a landscape architect, a black man in a predominantly white neighborhood. Jimi’s musical interests evolved at the early age of ten, when he feigned playing guitar on assorted brooms and yardsticks while mimicking the notes with his voice. At eleven, his father bought him an acoustic, and a year later he had forsaken it to go electric.

Sweet sixteen: Without a day of formal lessons, Hendrix taught himself how to play from records and the radio. He immediately hit the road, working in neighborhood groups until one of his own band members swiped his instrument, a prized possession which he wasn’t able to replace until his sophomore year at Garfield High School. Just before graduation, Hendrix ditched high school and bummed around helping his father as a gardener. As the grass started getting thick beneath his wanderlust feet, a sixteen year old Jimi threw in his lawnmower for a parachute and joined the 101st Airborne Division. On his 26th jump, Hendrix suffered a back injury which abruptly ended his military career. But before he bailed out of the service, Jimi made a timely connection with bass player Billy Cox, a man who was to play an important role in one of his later groups—The Band Of Gypsies.

“I first ran into Jimi in ‘61,” explained Cox, “at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where we were both waiting to be released. I was walking past the service club on my way to the barracks when I first heard him. He sounded like a combination of Beethoven and John Lee Hooker. In those days, he was still getting his shit together and he was into about four or five keys. But he’s always been great since he first picked up the guitar.”

Footloose and on the rise: The two musicians joined forces, picked up provisional drummer Gary Ferguson who hailed from Toledo, Ohio, and started playing service clubs and nightspots off the base. Their service stint completed, the duo took off for the great unknown, playing the odd gig, sleeping where they could, and picking up a drummer at dates. Cox then went the Nashville session route (playing with Wilson Pickett, The Impressions, etc.), while Hendrix assumed the role of a musical nomad.

Roaming around the States, Hendrix succeeded in finding work

A Long Way From Seattle: The Saga Of Jimi Hendrix

1964: “We were in the dressing room when we heard what sounded like a riot going on. There was Jimi, down on his knees biting the guitar.”

1970: “I don’t want to be a clown anymore.”

tually “get discovered.” Life down at the *Wha?* was a stoned gas—a precise likeness of those dingy clubs in Liverpool and Germany where the Beatles first broke into the business. Every Saturday afternoon American mini-replicas of the Who, the Yardbirds and the Rolling Stones would try to duplicate their fave idols down to the very last Mersey-tinted note.

Originality was a rarity, but it never really mattered since the majority of the audience were fifteen and sixteen year old parochial school chicks, who came only for the long-haired, cuban-heeled imitators of Jagger, Townshend, and Clapton. As a result, the whole scene turned out to be one great fantasy land for everyone concerned. Everyone concerned, that is, except Jimmy James—a shy, shaggy haired, black dude who stumbled into the *Wha?* with one hell of a dream, and who finally left

with several dozen R & B and big time brass revues. He managed to hustle gigs backing up such notables as Wilson Pickett, Jackie Wilson and the king of rock and roll—Little Richard.

Before long the traveling guitarist was snapped up by the Isley Brothers' band. Ronnie Isley explained the strange relationship:

"We were at the Palms Cafe, close to the Apollo, talking to a friend of ours, Tony Rice. He used to work with Joe Tex. I told him we were looking for a guitar player and he started telling me about this guy who had just come in on the bus from his home town—I think it was Seattle—yea—and he was living at the hotel Theresa. Tony said the guy didn't have enough strings on his guitar. I think that was the guitar his father gave him.

The shy vs. the jealous: "Tony said this kid, he was about fifteen or sixteen, was the best and that he played right-handed guitar with his left hand. I said to Tony 'aw come on, man, he can't be that good. Is he better than . . .' and then I started naming all the guitar players we knew that we'd like to have in our band and Tony said, 'He's better than any of 'em!' Finally he tells me this guy's name is Jimi Hendrix. Tony said Jimi had sat in with the Palms band one night and had killed everybody, so we made a date to meet him and hear him. Tony said, 'He's shy.'

"The night we met, Tony went up to the bandstand and asked if Jimi could sit in, but the guys in the band didn't want to let him on. So, I went up and asked them and they said, 'No, he plays too loud,' and so forth, and I knew it was jealousy. You know, musicians get jealous sometimes. So I said to Jimi, 'Look, come out to my house this weekend; I've got amplifiers and the band will come over and we'll have some fun.'

"We were living in Teaneck (New Jersey) and the band had rented a house in Englewood. Jimi came over and I went out and bought him some strings, so he'd have a full set. I came back and Jimi put the strings on and said, 'Do you mind if I tune up a little.' When he tuned up it was just like when he played—wonk, woink, wheeee! Well, we played some of our own tunes—he knew all of them from our records—and we hired him that afternoon. That was in March or April of 1964. . . .

Blow out in Bermuda: "First gig

he played with us was in Canada. He was crazy about places he'd never been to before. It was on that gig that—well, we'd have so much fun playing with him—I'd sing like his guitar (demonstrates) and then he'd play it back to me! Then we went to Bermuda. We played in a baseball stadium. We'd been advertised for months, so the place was filled and those who couldn't get seats were standing on hills overlooking the stadium. It was us and local talent. Our band backed the other acts. We were in the dressing room when we heard what sounded like a riot going on and we figured one of the local acts must have made a big hit. But this guy came into the dressing room and said, 'Who is that out there?' so we all peeked and there was Jimi, down on his knees, biting the guitar, and the crowd was just going crazy.

"Jimi was people. He never sat in a corner and cried about his problems or money or anything like that. He met people as people and they took him the same way. He didn't have any hangups personally.

Ruffles, chains, and rejection: "He didn't have any money hangups either. The band was getting 30 dollars a man a night in those days. Jim would come to us once in a while and ask us for an extra ten because he wanted to buy strings or clothes—stage clothes—or chains. You know, in those days, if you wore chains and things you looked really weird. Jimi would wear a chain belt with another chain hanging down and then when he'd jump around those chains would go flying. He had long hair then too. We wanted to pay Jimi more money to keep him happy, but he never asked for it. He wasn't a guy who tried to take advantage, if you know what I mean. When he went out to buy theatrical clothes, he'd buy something a little different, like a ruffled shirt or something, because his individuality was coming out. That was cool with us."

Well after awhile, it seems things got a little *too* cool—in fact *cold*. One thing was certain, big time stars like Little Richard (Jimi had previously been kicked out of Richard's band for playing long solos and stealing the show) and the Isley Brothers were never too keen about being upstaged by this young cocky dude with the erotic guitar style. It got to the point where Jimi proved to be just too much for all of them—so he split.

1966: During a break in the set a couple of English gents came in, took Jimmy James out for a cup of coffee, and never brought him back.



by Patrick (Willie Boy) Salvo,
Feathers Of An Angel

Strange twist: It was in the winter of '64-'65 that Hendrix, then calling himself Jimi Smith, teamed up with Curtis Knight and the Squires. It was at psychedelized soul venues like New York's famed Cheetah club that Hendrix first unveiled the theatrical extremes of his flamboyant guitar style. He flabbergasted onlookers and stopped many a go-go dancer in her tracks with his bizarre six-string acrobatics. Although he was generally his own boss, Jimi was still confined to the hard-core soul repertoire that these gigs demanded.

When he found an outlet in the small "beat clubs" of Greenwich Village, Hendrix began to set up shop and make some vital connections. One such musical liaison was with a man many call the white Taj Mahal of the music world—John Hammond. In a recent interview Hammond reminisced about their meeting: "He'd been playing at *The Cafe Wha?* and a friend of mine brought me down to hear this fantastic guy who was doing all these songs that I'd recorded for Vanguard on this album *So Many Roads*, and he was doing all these songs in the same way, and he was doing the same Robbie Robertson guitar stuff, only a little different. So anyway, I approached Jimi and I said, 'What you doing down here?' and he said, 'Somebody stole my guitar,' and blah, blah, blah. I said, 'Well, would you like to work with me?' And he said he'd love to. So I got this gig at the *Cafe Au Go Go* and we were there a week and the word started to get around and the Rolling Stones were there, it was incredible. Dylan, the Beatles, everybody. The Animals. The Who's Who of rock was there. And Jimi was sooo dynamic on guitar.

Sudden birth—The Experience: One of the Animal members who saw Hendrix (now going under the stage name of Jimmy James and the Blue Flames) at the *Wha?* happened to be Brian (Chas.) Chandler, a stocky Britisher who had been playing with Eric Burdon. Chandler became quite excited as prospective dollar signs danced merrily through his head. Hammond continues the story: "They wanted Jimi to leave the *Wha?* and come to England and record with the Animals (who were on the verge of re-forming at this point), this was the premise. I told him to go. Absolutely! 'Make the most of it.' " Hendrix took Hammond's advice and in a couple of days Jimi

James was on a nonstop flight to England and instant stardom.

The wild idea of Jimi Hendrix playing with the Animals never really materialized. Instead, something far more gratifying and unique blossomed from those early audition sessions—THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE. Noel Redding, a foppish lead guitarist who once did sessions for Tom Jones, also came down to audition for the Animals spot. Hendrix, who was on hand, promptly asked Noel, "Can you play bass?" If Redding couldn't, he learned how very quickly 'cause suddenly there were two of them. Noel recalls their first jam: "When Jimi and I first rehearsed together—we didn't have Mitch yet—he said to me, 'I've got this number,' and he showed me the chords of 'Hey Joe.' We ran through it for a couple of days, and then we got Mitch in and we took a lot of takes. We took about 30 takes of 'Hey Joe' in about three different studios to finally get it right. Yea, we worked like bastards."

Shattered records: As you probably know, the rest was history. Their popularity was instantaneous. They followed the SRO date at the Olympia with one record breaking engagement after another. Just eight days after the Beach Boys had broken the house record at the Tivoli in Stockholm, by playing to 7,000 fans at two

shows, the Jimi Hendrix Experience came in to smash that record resoundingly by playing to 14,500 people in two shows! They were SRO at the Sports Arena in Copenhagen, where only the Rolling Stones had previously chalked up an SRO evening. At the Saville Theatre in London, they were the first act ever to sell out both shows. Their return engagement at the Saville a month later was completely sold out the day the box office opened. They had one chart-topping single after another: "Hey Joe," "Purple Haze," "Wind Cries Mary," etc., etc.. Then there were all those chartbusting LP's—*Are You Experienced?*, *Axis Bold As Love*, *Electric Ladyland*, etc. Never had there been a series of phonograph records which expressed such unity, such completeness. Each one was a total statement of what made Mr. Jimi Hendrix tick. If you got thoroughly involved with his lyrics, you found yourself trespassing into the mind of a very complicated and intense individual.

Sexual outrage: And, of course, there was his merchandising—for instance the design of his album jackets was thought out down to the very last erotic detail. One record company V.I.P. commented, "If you didn't dig Hendrix for his music, you just had to pick up his records for the album covers. For instance, the English *Electric Ladyland* features Jimi posing with at least 50 naked dollies, could you beat that! 50 of 'em, and they're all beautiful. They're all holding up the American version of the same album—and everything's hanging out. It was unheard of at the time." By now it was getting quite obvious that Hendrix's physical, visual and musical image was one of blatant sexuality from top to bottom, and no one who ever saw or heard him could deny it!

Finally, in June 1967, the man from Seattle who had become a sensation in England and on the Continent returned as a celebrity to the U.S., where he had been virtually unknown only nine months before.

His American debut was his immortal axe-burning episode at the Monterey Pop Festival, where he formally introduced his musical eroticism to the flower-power generation. Capping his performance with his version of the English-American National Anthem, he demolished the minds of the 5,000 or so awed spectators.



1966: When Noel Redding showed up to audition for a guitar slot with The Animals, Hendrix nabbed him to play bass.

Sacrificial flames: Peter Townshend of the Who had become famous for destroying his guitar; Hendrix carried the ritual one fantasy farther. After sensuously fondling his musical instrument, he vividly pantomimed the act of copulation by using his guitar as his sexual partner. Apparently satisfied with his Fender's performance, Hendrix offered his colorfully-painted axe up to the gods, as a soul sacrifice. Smashing it against his amps until it wilted to the ground, he then laced it with lighter fluid and set it afire. As the flames and smoke ascended to the clouds, Hendrix walked off stage with his guitar still feeding back joyously.

From that day on, Hendrix became a legend who would go on to execute his erotic musical acts a thousand times over to overflow crowds around the globe. Hailed by many as the eighth wonder of the world, he performed at indoor stadiums, outdoor festivals, on top of roofs and next to volcanoes. From Maine to Maui, from Woodstock to the Isle Of Wight, the name Jimi Hendrix became sacred. Tickets had to be captured six months in advance to see this "freaky wild man of pop" hump, bump and eventually eat out his guitar. Nobody wanted to miss a sexual dynamo who gave his audience everything that Jagger and Morrison could only promise. Oddly enough, the fact that he played some excellent music throughout his antics was being all too easily pushed to the background simply because the masses came to see the visual freak show, not really to listen and absorb.

Betrayal and doubt: In the end, this is what led to Jimi Hendrix's downfall. To put it bluntly, he became a slave to his own image and stage act. The very same image that in the beginning propelled him to stardom was now slowly destroying him. After a year or so his concerts were not concerts anymore, but merely sex shows where for \$5.00 a head the audience was allowed to relive its own sexual fantasies. Even after the initial novelty wore off, Hendrix was still at the mercy of his audiences (and perhaps his managerial overseers)—forced to continue with his sexual rituals night after night. For months, he had expressed desires to eliminate "The Theatrics," but the general masses weren't about to give them up. Soon he questioned his own abilities—"was I an artist or merely a hero-worshipped

clown?" he would ask. "If I'm such a great musician, why don't they take me seriously and allow me to do my new material without the acrobatics?"

Blinded by the sensationalism of a Hendrix "experience," his audiences would applaud Jimi's every move—whether it was good or bad. He would intentionally play sloppily on occasion to test his listeners out—and sure enough, they'd still go crazy, showering him with standing ovations. Slowly but surely his own audience was betraying him, without even knowing it.

Opium music: Inevitably, the Experience parted due to internal pressures and musical differences—with Noel forming his own band (the ill-fated Fat Mattress) and Mitch going into semi-retirement. Hendrix then tried several assorted lineups with Buddy Miles and Mitch Mitchell alternating on drums and either old army pal Billy Cox or Noel back again on bass. As suspected, things were never quite the same. Towards the end Jimi went into seclusion up near Woodstock and tried to get a "conceptual musical family" in the hope of giving his music a chance to "stretch out." He was searching for new directions—e.g., classical mixed with serious blues, etc.. At interviews he called it "Sunshine Music," "Sweet Opium Music" and "Western Sky Music." The concept sounded vague, but interesting. By now he had done away with his freaky stage image; and as always, he spoke in a subdued almost shy voice: "I got out of the 'Freak' thing because I felt I was becoming too loud visually," he explained. "I look at groups like Cactus and Mountain who are new on the scene and they are going through the same changes that I went through—wearing weird clothes and strangling themselves with junk jewelry."

"The disturbing thing for me, was that I felt maybe *too many people were coming to see me and not enough to listen to me*. My nature changed as well. I just hid for a bit, and now I'm emerging as me."

"Direction is the hardest thing for me to find at the present, but maybe I'll get an organist and another vocalist, so that I can step back and just concentrate on guitar playing. One thing is certain—I don't want to be considered a clown anymore. I don't want to be a rock and roll star; I'm just a musician."

Wrong, Jimi Hendrix. You were one of *the* musicians. •

1966: The first gig of the Jimi Hendrix Experience—"We'd been together four days and we knew five songs. We played and the Frenchies went crackers."



1970: In the end, his audience betrayed him. "If I'm such a great musician," he pleaded, "why don't they take me seriously and allow me to do my material without the acrobatics."